

# HIGHGROUND

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Volume 3, Issue 1



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## Brockton, Montana— Welcome to the NFIP!



Residents of Brockton may now purchase flood insurance. That was not possible prior to the community of Brockton joining the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The community of Brockton numbers around 245 residents. It's in northeast Montana, along the Missouri River and has been identified by FEMA as being in a flood-prone area. Communities in identified flood-prone areas are wise to join the voluntary NFIP. Non-participation by these communities means flood insurance is not available.

Brockton is now one of more than 20,000 communities that participate in the NFIP in the country and one of 128 communities that participate in Montana. To learn more on how your community can join the NFIP, see page 3.

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## Montana Model Floodplain Ordinance Update

Thanks to everyone who provided input during the Ordinance Update meetings that were held last fall. In spite of the DNRC's intentions to have a new ordinance developed by the end of 2006, that did not happen. The ordinance is still undergoing extensive internal review and has been given a lower level priority through the NFIP CAP-SSSE agreement with FEMA. For now, the state intends to continue using the interim ordinance that was approved by FEMA in October of 2006.

## Flood Studies for Subdivisions

The DNRC, through their regional engineers and Helena staff, has assisted local governments with review of subdivision floodplain delineations and flood hazard evaluations and will continue to do so. However, the DNRC will no longer provide statements of waivers for these studies.

During the last twenty years, streams that nobody dreamt would ever need mapping are now experiencing heavy development pressure. It is reasonable that developers produce floodplain delineations and flood hazard evaluations. The need

to do these studies is required through local subdivision rules and regulations. Some local governments often have language within their subdivision rules that allow a waiver of the study or evaluation requirements if the DNRC states in writing that the proposed subdivision is not in a flood hazard area.

Over the last several years, the work necessary for DNRC staff to prepare a statement to support a waiver has become excessive. In some cases it is more labor than it would be for the developer to do the actual study. Therefore, the DNRC will no longer provide these waivers. (continued page 2)

## New Floodplain Maps, Current Montana Priorities

FEMA's Map Modernization program will convert paper Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's) to digital maps (DFIRM's). The paper format will still be available. The new digital maps may include air photo and topographic layers.

FEMA's original plan was to update and digitize every FIRM in the U.S., county by county. The cost of mapping ranges from \$400 to \$3,000 per linear stream mile plus \$3,000 to \$5,000 per panel. Based on input from Congress, stakeholders and the adoption of new floodplain boundary standards, FEMA revised the original plan and established priorities for areas to receive new mapping, based largely on population and flood risk. The hope is that all counties may still get mapped, but this is dependent on funding and thus uncertain. The prioritization process is known as the Mid-Course Adjustment and occurred this past year. In Montana, the priority counties proposed for DFIRM production appear in the table at right.

This is an abbreviated message about the Map Modernization program.

For more information: about Map Modernization in Montana, visit [www.montanadfirm.com](http://www.montanadfirm.com).

Or contact Millie Bowman, Montana's MAPMOD Specialist at (406) 444-6656 or [MBowman@mt.gov](mailto:MBowman@mt.gov).

County	Status	2000 Population
1. Missoula County	In Progress	95,802
2. Flathead County	In Progress	74,471
3. Gallatin County	In Progress	67,831
4. Park County	In Progress	15,694
5. Carbon County	In Progress	9,552
6. Yellowstone County	Recently funded via 2006 grant	129,352
7. Lewis & Clark County	Scheduled for 2007	55,716
8. Cascade County	Scheduled for 2007	78,347
9. Fergus County Partial of county	Scheduled for 2007 or 2008	8,164
10. Lake County	Scheduled for 2007 or 2008	26,507
11. Ravalli County	Scheduled for 2008	36,070
12. Silver Bow County	Scheduled for 2008	29,417
13. Mineral County	Scheduled for 2008	3,884
14. Sanders County	Scheduled for 2008	10,227
15. Broadwater County	Scheduled for 2008	4,385

Counties not listed in the tables which are nearing completion of the MAPMOD process are McCone, Richland, and Roosevelt.

### Subdivisions, continued from page 1

So does this mean that developers need to spend excessive money completing flood studies in areas that are obviously out of the floodplain? No. If the DNRC is asked to review technical aspects of flood hazard evaluations, they will insist that all consultants meet or exceed the guidelines set forth in "Guidelines for Obtaining 100-Year Flood Elevations in Approximate Zone A or Unmapped Areas." This document can be found on the DNRC web page: [http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water\\_op/floodplain/](http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/).

There are provisions within this document that allow for less stringent but adequate analysis when a proposed subdivision is well above the 100-year flood elevation. If a consultant feels that the subdivision is located at an elevation significantly higher than the 100-year flood elevation, they are allowed to use methods that will not cost their clients significant money.

By Terry Voeller, State Floodplain Engineer

## Substantial Improvement -

Additions to the State's Model Floodplain Development Permit

Note a couple of additions to the permit form: Question 6 is about "substantial improvement" on existing structures. Developments on these structures that we should not overlook. Question 7 is to learn if the structure or site is on the National Register of Historic Places. Visit our website to see the latest version of the permit template.

[http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water\\_op/floodplain](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain) See "Local Government Model Floodplain Administrators Forms" "[Floodplain Development Permit](#)"

If you do not use the state's form, make sure substantial improvement is reflected on your community's form.

For more information about Substantial Improvement, visit

<http://www.fema.gov/NFIPKeywords/description.jsp?varKeywordID=52>

## How to Join the NFIP

A community submits an application package to FEMA that includes the following:

- One page application form (FEMA Form 81-64)
- A community adopted resolution of intent, which indicates a desire to participate in the NFIP and commitment to recognize hazards and carry out the objectives of the program.
- An adopted FEMA approved floodplain ordinance.

Additionally, a visit to the community by a FEMA or State representative is required.

For more information contact Marijo Camrud with FEMA at (303) 235-4835 or [Marijo.Camrud@dhs.gov](mailto:Marijo.Camrud@dhs.gov) or Lana Hedlund with the DNRC at (406) 444-6654 or [lhedlund@mt.gov](mailto:lhedlund@mt.gov)

Questions to test your "floodplainer quotient". (Answers on page 5)

1. What year is associated with NGVD?
2. What year is associated with NAVD?
3. What the heck are NGVD and NAVD?

## The Latest on Levees



### How do I know if my community has a levee?

Places you can check:

- Your current floodplain map.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers Office [www.usace.army.mil/howdoi/where.html](http://www.usace.army.mil/howdoi/where.html). The USACE will have information about any federally owned levees in your area and may have information about other levees as well.

### What do I do if there is a levee in my community?

**If your levee is certified**, find your certification papers. They will be required by FEMA to accredit your levee during the Map Modernization process.

*Note: A levee built by the USACE may not necessarily be certified or may not necessarily be certifiable.*

**If your levee is not certified and you are confident it will get certified within 2 years**, FEMA may designate a Provisionally Accredited Levee (PAL). A warning will be noted on the DFIRM, see below.

"WARNING: Provisionally Accredited Levee. For explanation, see the "Notes to Users"

WARNING: This levee, dike or other structure has been provisionally mapped as providing protection from the 1-percent-annual-chance flood. The levee owner or community is required to submit documentation necessary to comply with 44 CFR Section 65.10 by (\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_). Because of the risk of overtopping or failure of the structure, communities should take proper precautions to protect lives and minimize damages in these areas, such as issuing an evacuation plan and encouraging property owners to purchase flood insurance".

For more information about levees visit the following FEMA website.

[http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/ly\\_intro.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/ly_intro.shtm)

## Miles City, November, 2006

An Association of Montana Floodplain Managers (AMFM) and DNRC collaborative effort resulted in Basic Floodplain Management Training for 21 people. Sean O'Callaghan, Chairperson of AMFM and Floodplain Administrator for Gallatin County provided instruction on floodplain administration from a helpful perspective – that of a floodplain administrator! Thank you, Sean. John Marks and Lloyd Devies of Miles City and Custer County secured a conference room and offered friendly hospitality. Participants traveled for near and far advancing Montana's knowledge base of Floodplains. Thanks to All!

### AMFM

Keep current on training/conference offerings which will be offered through AMFM. Visit their website at <http://www.mtfloods.org>

### Maryland is Coming to Montana

FEMA is taking a new direction. For years floodplain administrators from around the country have traveled to Emmitsburg, Maryland for training in *Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program, Course E273*. Starting in 2007, E273 will be "hitting the road" and will be offered in some states across the country including Montana! Training will be more accessible to Montanans and FEMA transportation costs will be reduced.

### UPCOMING

## FLOODPLAIN BASICS

R.S.V.P.

To Bri Shipman (406) 444-0862 [bshipman@mt.gov](mailto:bshipman@mt.gov)  
By January 23rd, this date has been extended!

Learn More about:

- National Flood Insurance Program
- How to Read a Floodplain Map
- Federal, State and Local- Roles and Responsibilities,
- Floodplain Permitting
- Program to Reduce Insurance Premiums

Tuesday, Feb. 13

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Holiday Inn Grand Montana  
5500 Midland Road

### Glasgow

Wednesday, Jan. 31

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Cottonwood Inn and Suites  
Highway 2 East

### Havre

Tuesday, Jan. 30

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Town House Inns  
601 1<sup>st</sup> St. W

### Lewistown

Wednesday, Feb. 14

9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Yogo Inn  
211 East Main



Almost Free

-\$10 Lunch Fee-

Pay-at-the-door. Do not send money.

Waived for those floodplain administrators bearing local **floodplain ordinances and local floodplain maps!**

Waived for non-local floodplain administrators who bring good questions to ask, or an eagerness to learn.

## Thank you Floodplain Administrators (FA)

The floodplain management program in Montana is nothing without the work being done by the local floodplain administrators (FA). They serve their communities: providing information, maps, guidance, permits, permit review, etc. and ensure enforcement of their community's local floodplain management ordinance while maintaining FEMA compliance, which serves a bigger community, the country as a whole. Their duties and responsibilities are anything but small and they fall to people in a range of positions: County Commissioners, Sanitarians, Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinators, Town Clerks, County Planners, Mayors, etc. We thank you for the work you do in reducing flood hazards in your communities, which benefits all of Montana.

Do you know of others interested in receiving this newsletter? Let Bri know.

## Coming in the next issue...

**Focus on a FA**—Highlighting a floodplain administrator will occur in the next and subsequent issues of the Highground.

Newsletter submissions: suggestions for a FA to highlight, articles, photos, helpful websites, etc. are due as follows:

**March 15<sup>th</sup>** - Deadline for April Issue

**June 15<sup>th</sup>** - Deadline for July Issue

**September 15<sup>th</sup>** - Deadline for October Issue

### Answers from page 2

1. NGVD - 1929
2. NAVD - 1988
3. **NGVD** (National Geodetic Vertical Datum) is used to keep elevation determinations throughout the US consistent. **NAVD** (North American Vertical Datum) serves the same purpose but is a newer standard datum. The elevation difference between the two datum can be as much as 4.9 feet!

**Keep us current** on your community's local Floodplain Administrator and their contact information. Here's why:

- We want to keep local FAs current on guidelines and training.
- It is required by FEMA.

Send updated information to **Bri Shipman** via:

Email: [bshipman.mt.gov](mailto:bshipman.mt.gov) or

Phone: 444- 0862 or

FAX: 444-0533 or

Snail Mail: Montana DNRC, PO Box 201601,  
Helena, MT 59621-1601

**State of Montana**

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
1424 Ninth Avenue, PO Box 201601  
Helena, M T 59621-1601

**Phone: (406) 444-0862**

**Fax: (406) 444-0533**

**E-Mail:**

[bshipman@mt.gov](mailto:bshipman@mt.gov)

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## Conference Announced!

*"...The premier floodplain management  
conference in Montana!"*

Association of Montana Floodplain  
Managers (AMFM)

April 2-5, 2007

Holiday Inn

Bozeman, Montana

For more information visit

<http://www.mtfloods.org/>

**BONUS:** CFM, Certified Floodplain  
Manager testing available during  
the conference.

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water\\_op/floodplain/](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/)

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